



CONGREGAZIONE DEI MISSIONARI DI SAN CARLO

SCALABRINIANI

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SUPERIOR GENERAL'S SPEECH WELCOMING THE HOLY FATHER

Holy Father,

Our Scalabrinian Family is pleased that you have given us this opportunity to thank you personally, along with the Dioceses of Piacenza and Como and the migrant communities we work with, for the grace of proclaiming John Baptist Scalabrini a saint. It was a great joy for us!

"May I make myself a saint." This was a frequent expression in John Baptist Scalabrini's intentions. And Scalabrini did not consider holiness as something impossible to achieve. "What formed the most illustrious saints were not extraordinary gifts, luminous apparitions, amazing miracles. It was the fidelity with which they fulfilled the duties of their state and fulfilled them in view of God. Here is the true, essential character of holiness."

You recently reminded us, "Holiness sprouts from the concrete life of Christian communities. Saints do not come from a 'parallel world'." Let us say, Holy Father, that many times, listening to you, we seem to hear Scalabrini's voice. Particularly when you talk about migrants.

Yesterday you left us with a question, "Today we think of our migrants, those who die and those who are able to enter: do we receive them as brothers or do we exploit them?" St. John Baptist Scalabrini looked at the migrants of his time to the "thousands of our brothers who live almost without defense of the distant homeland, the object of bullying too often unpunished without the comfort of a friendly word," and concluded, "I confess, the flush of redness rises in my face, I feel humiliated in my quality of priest and citizen." After your question and remembering the words of our holy founder and inspirer, we should feel our minds and hearts touched even more. Even more, after canonization, we must be able to blush when we see our migrant brothers and sisters exploited and humiliated.

Therefore, besides being for us a reason for joy, the canonization of John Baptist Scalabrini is a responsibility for us. The responsibility to allow ourselves to be moved, so as not to become victims of the indifference that characterizes so much of our time. The responsibility then not to have a sterile emotion, but an active one that becomes a capacity to remedy the injustices we see. The responsibility to sensitize society and governments so that they do not close themselves in the selfishness that leads to exclusion, that exclusion that, as you told us yesterday, becomes "criminal exclusion" because it leads migrants to die before our eyes. In this perspective, responsibility is converted into co-responsibility with governments, international bodies, civil society organizations and the Church. The responsibility to be humbly at the service of the Church, the Church that is our Mother. Saint Scalabrini said, "Let us look into the face of our Mother and be ashamed of having done so little for her so far."

Above all, after canonization we must feel more strongly the responsibility to become saints and that is, as you teach us, to have "first of all the experience of being loved by God, of freely receiving his love, his mercy." We pray that the joy we experienced yesterday will not be the excitement of a day, "but the certainty that we can face everything with the grace and boldness that come from God." The audacity to be able to face the challenges that the world of human mobility sets before us knowing that we are guided by a holy Founder who, even in the dramas of his time, knew how to have the foresight of the man of faith, the foresight to understand that "the Providence that presides over human destinies, guides them, even through catastrophes, toward the goal, which is the perfecting of man on earth and the glory of God in heaven."

We feel comforted, in our mission, knowing that the Holy Father is pointing us to the safe path today, as it

was pointed out in his time by Saint Scalabrini, who, writing to Pius X, said that he had seen "the faith die out in millions of souls for lack of spiritual nourishment" and concluded that "it is urgent to provide and that it is a grave error, not to say a fault, of all of us in charge of the government of the Church to allow this state of affairs to be prolonged." These are the words of the Memorial written to the Pope calling for intervention by the universal Church for all migrants. They are the words we humbly leave as a gift to you, along with our prayers, as we invoke your apostolic blessing on the Scalabrinian Family, on the communities of migrants, refugees and sailors among whom we work, and on all those of good will who share the mission the Lord has entrusted to us.

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER, POPE FRANCIS, TO THE SCALABRINI PILGRIMS GATHERED IN THE PAUL VI HALL, on October 10, 2022

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

All in a celebration mood, aren't we? I thank Father Chiarello for the words of greeting and introduction. I am glad to be able to spend some time with you, who participated yesterday in the Eucharistic Celebration and Canonization of Blessed John Baptist Scalabrini. You are a very diverse assembly -this is nice! -: there are missionaries, missionary sisters, secular missionaries and lay Scalabrinians; there are faithful from the dioceses of Como and Piacenza; and then there are migrants from so many countries, a beautiful "fruit salad," and this is nice. In this way, you well represent the breadth of Bishop Scalabrini's work, the openness of his heart, to whom, so to speak, one diocese was not enough.

Of great significance was his apostolate on behalf of Italian emigrants. At that time thousands of them were leaving for the Americas. Bishop Scalabrini looked at them with the gaze of Christ, of whom the Gospel tells us; for example, Matthew writes thus, "Seeing the crowds, he felt compassion for them, because they were weary and exhausted like sheep that have no shepherd" (9:36). And he took great care with great charity and pastoral intelligence to ensure adequate material and spiritual assistance for them.

Even today, migrations constitute a very important challenge. They highlight the urgent need to put fraternity before rejection, solidarity before indifference. Today every baptized person is called to reflect God's gaze toward our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters - there are so many of them -, to let his gaze widen our gaze, thanks to the encounter with humanity on the move, through a concrete proximity, following the example of Bishop Scalabrini.

We are called today to live and spread the culture of encounter, an encounter between equals as migrants and the people of the country that welcomes them. This is an enriching experience, as it reveals the beauty of diversity. And it is also fruitful, because the faith, hope and tenacity of migrants can be an example and an incentive for those who want to commit themselves to building a world of peace and well-being for all. And in order for it to be for everyone, you know it well, we must start from the least: if we do not start from the last ones, it is not for everyone. As in hiking in the mountains: if the first ones run, the group breaks up, and the first ones after a while burst out; but if you keep up with the last ones, you all go up together. This is a rule of wisdom. When we walk, when we are pilgrim, always you have to follow the pace of the last ones.

To make fraternity and social friendship grow, we are all called to be creative, to think outside the box. We are called to open new spaces, where art, music and being together become instruments of intercultural dynamics, where we can savor the richness of the encounter of diversity.

This is why I urge you, Scalabrinian missionaries, to always let yourselves be inspired by your holy founder, father of migrants, of all migrants. May his charism renew in you the joy of being with migrants, of being at their service, and of doing so with faith, animated by the Holy Spirit, in the conviction that in each of them we encounter the Lord Jesus. And this helps you to have the style of generous gratuity, to spare no physical and economic resources to promote migrants in an integral way; and it also helps you to work in communion of purpose, as a family, united in diversity.

Dear brothers and sisters, may the holiness of John Baptist Scalabrini "infect" us with the desire to be saints, each in an original, unique way, as God's infinite imagination has made us and wants us to be. And may his intercession give us joy, give us hope to walk together toward the New Jerusalem, which is a symphony of faces and peoples, toward the Kingdom of justice, fraternity and peace.

Thank you for coming to share your celebration! From my heart I bless you and all your fellow travelers where you live. And please do not forget to pray for me. Thank you!